

TRANSIT VILLAGE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Miami-Dade Transit is proposing the construction of a bus transfer facility at the intersection of NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street in the city of Miami. To help fund the project, provide additional amenities to its patrons, and stimulate economic redevelopment in this economically disadvantaged community, MDT anticipates entering into a joint-development agreement with a private enterprise. The preferred alternative for the proposed bus transfer facility, which is now referred to as the “NW 7 Avenue Transit Village,” is to construct the facility at the southeast quadrant of the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection. The existing 3.8-acre site is of sufficient size; contains vacant land and commercial buildings (several are vacant); is desirable for transit operations; and has no significant environmental impacts.

The conceptual site plan for the Transit Village includes bus bay loading/unloading areas along NW 6 Court for four buses and provisions for charging stations for future electric hybrid buses. An anticipated joint-development of the site will provide a multi-story retail, office, and residential facility with a parking garage. This facility would also support staff and would include a ticket center, drivers’ restrooms and lounge area, public restrooms, and seating areas for pedestrian and patron use to access buses. An internal park-like setting with gardens, abundant landscaping and walkways is also proposed. In addition, architectural highlights and Art in Public Places will be featured throughout the site to reflect the unique cultural composition of the local community.

The development of the proposed Transit Village has proceeded in cooperation with the goals and policies of federal, state, and local government authority. The project is consistent with approved transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans.

The major roadways within the study area will not be adversely affected by the project, although additional signalization may be required. NW 7 Avenue is an important transit corridor used by buses into the downtown area from northern areas, and NW 62 Street is an important east-west arterial, having an interchange with Interstate I-95 immediately east of the proposed site location. All bus routes associated with the proposed NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street facility currently pass by the proposed site. Therefore, no

substantial changes to bus routes are required. The number of miles traveled by buses and the local traffic patterns along NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street are expected to be similar to existing conditions. In addition, the project does not create new transit operations and does not involve new highway construction nor modification to existing highways that would increase capacity. A Traffic Study has been completed for this project and significant adverse impacts on the local transportation system are not expected. The Transit Village will reduce traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity of the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection by removing the existing on-street bus stops.

The project is expected to increase bus traffic on the local roads surrounding the proposed terminal site including NW 6 Court and NW 60 Street to modify the direction of traffic flow on NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street. The use of these local roads, including changes in traffic flow, is required to provide efficient and safe circulation of buses around the terminal. The potential for transportation impacts or increasing traffic congestion is considered minimal because the traffic on these local streets is insignificant and other alternative routes are available. In addition, property access is not expected to be a concern along NW 7 Avenue, NW 62 Street, NW 6 Court or NW 60 Street because the proposed facility will be completely contained within these boundaries.

Due to the characteristics of this project, the proposed Transit Village is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the local or regional air quality or to contribute to exceeding the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Therefore, this project is in conformance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Clean Air Act (CAA) because it will not cause any violations of the NAAQS and it is included in the urban area's current approved, conforming Miami-Dade County 2005 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

The potential for the project to impact noise and vibration sensitive sites were evaluated based on procedures within Federal Transit Authority's *Guidance Manual for Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* (1995). Noise impacts associated with the proposed project are considered minimal. One single-family residence is expected to be impacted by noise from the daily operation of the proposed project. Noise abatement

measures were considered but were found not reasonable. Because the construction impacts are short-term and localized and involve a limited number of noise sensitive sites, the construction noise impacts are considered minimal.

There will be no significant long- or short-term vibration impacts to adjacent properties or the community at large. However, since the limits of construction and the types of construction equipment required will not be determined until the design phase, it is recommended additional vibration impact analysis be conducted during the design phase or prior to construction to minimize the potential for impacts to vibration sensitive sites.

The proposed Transit Village will be located on previously developed lands. No natural biological communities, wetlands, or water resources are located in the vicinity of the proposed Transit Village site. Therefore, the project will not impact any wetlands, water resources including floodplains, water quality, navigable waterways, coastal zones, wild and scenic rivers, or wildlife habitat.

A Contamination Screening Evaluation was conducted to assist in the identification of potential contamination sources and sites within and/or adjacent to the proposed Transit Village site. Significant contamination was not identified on the project site or in the immediate vicinity of it. Several potential sources of soil and/or groundwater contamination within the project boundaries warrant additional Level II Contamination Assessment; however, it is not anticipated that significant contamination will be discovered. Any contamination discovered will be avoided during the design of the drainage and other subsurface improvements. The community will be protected from any exposed contaminated material by properly containing, marking, and fencing the material.

The proposed project will not displace or impact any public facilities, major shopping centers, hospitals, schools, or residences. Also, no residential neighborhoods will be bisected or adversely affected by the proposed project. The project will result in a few business relocation impacts; however there will be no residential relocations and the relocations will not adversely affect community cohesion or impact any community services.

No farmlands as defined by 7 CFR 658 are located in the project vicinity or will be affected by the proposed project. Construction of the Transit Village will not result in any significant adverse impacts to utilities or railroads. There are no currently-operating rail lines on the site or in the vicinity of the site. There are no known significant underground or above ground utilities on site. However, a number of minor utilities are located on site and within the right of way of adjacent streets. Coordination with the utility companies will be conducted during the design phase and prior to any construction activities to field locate any underground facilities within the project area so they can be avoided or relocated.

The Transit Village will be designed to enhance the safety and security of transit riders and pedestrians. This includes the use of bus bay loading/unloading areas to replace the existing on-street stops. Facility lighting will enhance the security of the area for MDT patrons.

The Transit Village will result in a change to the visual aesthetic characteristics of the surrounding area. To minimize the potential for visual impacts, terminal design will comply with local design guidelines and feedback obtained through a series of workshops with the local community. In addition, landscaping will be used to enhance the view of the Transit Village. Therefore, the project is not likely to adversely affect the area's aesthetics.

The project was evaluated in terms of environmental justice associated with minority and low-income populations. The Transit Village project, which is located within a minority/low income neighborhood, will not result in any disproportionate adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations.

A Cultural Resource Assessment Survey was prepared to identify potential project impacts on cultural resources. The survey revealed no historic resources within the Area of Potential Effect that are potentially *National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)*-eligible, determined *NRHP*-eligible, or *NRHP*-listed, on an individual basis or as part of a district. One resource, the Laborer's Local Union #478 (also known as Laborer's International Union) at 799 NW 62nd Street (8DA7337), is considered potentially eligible

for designation by the city of Miami and is currently being evaluated by the city of Miami. No previously recorded archaeological sites were located within the study area and the study area has a low potential for both precontact and historic archaeological sites.

The only potential Section 4(f) resource in the immediate vicinity of the Transit Village project is Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Bike Path, which runs along the south side of NW 62 Street. It is located immediately adjacent to the project site; however there will be no direct or indirect impacts to it. Furthermore, bicycle access to the resource will be significantly enhanced with the construction of the proposed project. Therefore, Section 4(f) is not considered applicable because the project does not affect any activities, features, or attributes of potentially Section 4(f) resources properties, nor substantially impair vital functions.

The project's construction activities will have temporary and minimal impacts on air, noise, and traffic flow within the immediate vicinity. There are no residences, institutional uses, or major roadways adjacent to the project site that will be affected. Therefore, the proposed action will not result in significant construction impacts.

Coordination with the public and other agencies represents an important element in the study process and has been ongoing since the *SR-7/NW 7 Avenue Transportation Corridor Study* was sanctioned by Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek. The latest coordination efforts included several public workshops and a public hearing for the proposed project.

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Miami-Dade County Transit (MDT) is proposing the construction of a bus transfer facility at the intersection of NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street in the city of Miami (see Figure 1). To help fund the project, provide additional amenities to its patrons, and stimulate economic redevelopment in this economically disadvantaged community, MDT anticipates entering into a joint-development agreement with a private enterprise. The preferred alternative for the proposed bus transfer facility, which is now referred to as the “NW 7 Avenue Transit Village,” is to construct the facility at the southeast quadrant of the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection. The assessment of potential impacts associated with the proposed Transit Village is the focus of this Environmental Assessment.

The proposed Transit Village is to be located on a 3.8-acre parcel within the Liberty City/Model City Business District between NW 7 Avenue, NW 62 Street, NW 6 Court, and NW 60 Street. Liberty City and Model City are communities within the city of Miami municipal boundaries. Study area photographs are included in Appendix A.

The conceptual site plan for the Transit Village includes bus bay loading/unloading areas along NW 6 Court for four buses and provisions for charging stations for future electric hybrid buses. The anticipated joint-development of the site provides a parking garage, and may also include some retail/office space, and residential units. This facility would also support some transit staff, and include a ticket center, drivers’ restrooms and lounge area, public restrooms, and seating areas for pedestrian and patron use to access buses. An internal park-like setting with gardens, abundant landscaping and walkways is also proposed. In addition, architectural highlights and Art in Public Places will be featured throughout the site to reflect the unique cultural composition of the local community.

Figure 1

2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for this project was established during the *SR-7/NW 7 Avenue Transportation Corridor Study*, which was sanctioned by then Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek. A copy of the *Executive Summary Report* is included in Appendix B. The study assessed the transportation deficiencies along the NW 7 Avenue Corridor between NW 54 Street and NW 95 Street in Miami, with the general objective to improve the efficiency of the area's transportation system including:

- ***Transit Service***
- ***The Mobility Needs of the Community***
- ***Improve Sidewalk, Illumination, and Safety***
- ***Investigate the feasibility of building a Multi-modal Passenger Activity Center***
- ***Improve Roadway Conditions***
- ***Signalization / Drainage / Signage / Landscaping***
- ***Means to Provide Access to Jobs, Services and Centers of Trade***

The study identified different concepts by analyzing various approaches to reduce the need for costly future infrastructure investments, reduce potential environmental impacts, and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns with emphasis on the transit-oriented development projects (TOD). The study's strategies and recommendations also included physical improvements and enhancements to be implemented in the corridor and evaluated as a pilot project that can be applied in other communities. The study examined the existing conditions along the corridor and applied transportation development components through a conceptual master plan, while analyzing preliminary cost estimates, potential funding sources, and implementation options. The conclusion of the study supports the need for a Multi-modal Passenger Activity Center, i.e. a Transportation Hub for the 7 Avenue Corridor.

Based on the study findings and under the leadership of Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, the 7th Avenue Corridor Initiative, Inc. was formed. The mission of the 7th Avenue Corridor Initiative is to act as a catalyst for the revitalization of the 7th Avenue Corridor, which provides regional connectivity between Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, and serves the municipalities of Miami, North Miami and North Miami Beach. The initial geographic focus area is NW 7th Avenue corridor between 54 Street and 79

Street. It is this section that warrants redevelopment and provides the greatest potential for the revitalization of Liberty City. The existing businesses (or lack thereof) do not provide the amount of goods and services needed to foster the community into a viable tax base or offer the job opportunities to maintain self-sufficient residents within the community.

The constituents of the Liberty City/Model City community believe the transit hub would be a good catalytic project for the community, and concurs with the study that the development of such facility along the 7th Avenue Corridor will improve the efficiency of the area's transportation system. In addition, the hub will enhance transit services, address the mobility needs of the community, improve roadway conditions, be a means to provide access to jobs and services, and create new job opportunities.

The Transit Village will allow riders to transfer to other bus routes in a safer, more convenient and comfortable environment. Without this project, thousands of transit passengers would continue to transfer to other bus lines along streets, and on-street transfer activity would continue to be a major disruption to vehicular and pedestrian flow in the area.

The following sections describe the capacity deficiencies of the existing system of on-street bus stops and the project's consistency with local, state, and federal programs.

2.1 CAPACITY

The existing system of on-street bus stops has insufficient capacity and is a public safety concern. With the proposed facility, the needed bus stop will be provided off the streets. MDT estimates that four bus bays are required to meet current and future needs.

2.2 FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

The development of the proposed Transit Village has proceeded in cooperation with the goals and policies of federal, state, and local governmental authority. The project is consistent with approved transportation plans and local government comprehensive plans. The proposed project is included in the current adopted 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LTRP), which includes fully-funded projects from the approved 2002-2006 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) considered as Priority 1 projects of the plan, and is also found on the approved Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 TIP. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) identifies the project as Financial Management (FM) Number 4137541 and indicates the Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) grant allocation for the project is \$3,469,000. The Miami-Dade

County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Resolution #28-02 (September 26, 2002) amended the 2003 TIP to include TCSP funds for the site acquisition, design and construction of a passenger transfer center to be located on NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street. The project includes TCSP funds for site acquisition, Design and construction of a passenger transfer center to be located in Miami on NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street.

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The planning effort to identify the preferred location for the Transit Village was completed through the *SR-7/NW 7 Avenue Corridor Transportation Study*. Through this effort, the optimum site for the Transit Village was identified (i.e., the southeast quadrant of the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection). This section of the Environmental Assessment presents the factors considered in the selection of the preferred site. The two primary factors include maintaining bus system linkages and minimizing impacts to developed areas. Other factors include the unavailability of the properties at the other quadrants of the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection, and the high number of vacant commercial buildings at the southeast quadrant.

A key factor in the selection of the Transit Village site location was the ability to maintain bus system linkages, particularly along NW 7 Avenue, and to minimize changes to the existing bus routes. To accomplish these goals, the Transit Village should be located along the NW 7 Avenue corridor between NW 54 Street and NW 79 Street. The NW 62 Street location was determined to be optimal because it is in the center of the Liberty City/Model City Business District and has an interchange with I-95 located immediately east of the site. Location of the Transit Village along another street would result in major disruptions to existing traffic patterns and increase travel distances for buses. Therefore, relocating the terminal to other streets was not considered a viable alternative.

Each of the four quadrants of the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection were evaluated for operational benefits/constraints and impacts. The southwest quadrant is currently occupied by the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, which provides a variety of important community services. The northwest quadrant is currently occupied by a new Walgreen's pharmacy, which is also an important community resource. The

northeast quadrant, which was formerly occupied by Winn Dixie Marketplace and is now vacant, is the site of the proposed Edison Marketplace.

The Edison Marketplace is an important step in community-responsive economic redevelopment projects. This project is driven by an urgent need to remedy the under investment and dis-investment phenomena which fuel and sustain the decline of inner city economies generally; and threatening the Edison Center Business Corridor. Belafonte Tacolcy Center (BTC) and Tacolcy Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) are the principals of the project. BTC, a thirty-five year old youth services provider in the Liberty City community, created TEDC after the civil disturbances of 1980 to develop and manage Edison Plaza, a 43,000 sq. ft. neighborhood shopping center, and to implement an economic development strategy in the Edison Center Business District. BTC owns Edison Plaza, and TEDC has acquired adjacent properties, assembled to expand the center. Their combined properties provide more than five acres for the development of Edison Marketplace, which will be a neighborhood shopping center of approximately 60,000 square feet.

The objective of the new development is to construct a new destination and convenience commercial center. New jobs will be created, helping to sustain existing businesses, and jobs, as well as attracting new businesses to the Edison Center/Liberty City community. The goal of Edison Marketplace, in conjunction with the Transportation Hub, the Martin Luther King Business Center, and the MDC Business Depot is to reconfigure and revitalize this extremely important business center, which is located at the intersection of the major vehicular arteries and the entrance and exit ramps of I-95 into the Liberty City community.

This Neighborhood Shopping Center will be anchored by a supermarket, which is highly needed in the area. The nearest market for residents in the area is a Winn Dixie store, 1.6 miles away, and a Jorge & Jerry's IGA 2.5 miles away. Market studies shows the distance of these markets are a considerable hardship for many consumers due to lack of transportation and the age of consumers in the area. The data shows that prospective tenants will generate sales of approx. \$6.31 per sq. ft. in the first year of operation. Edison Marketplace will provide a community hub for commerce, and will consist of three parts:

- Co-located retail
- Out-parcel retail
- Office facilities

During construction, the project is expected to generate more than 150 temporary jobs. The supermarket is scheduled to provide in excess of 100 full time and part-time jobs, prioritized for community residents. As the center matures, other potential tenants are estimated to create 100 additional jobs. The center will ensure retention of several existing businesses and their employees as tenants in the new center. Therefore, the other quadrants were not viable alternatives and were not considered further.

The southeast quadrant represents the best site for the proposed Transit Village. It maintains the system linkage, minimizes bus route changes, does not result in significant impacts, and can accommodate the following recommendations for the successful implementation of a user-friendly Transit Village that would benefit residents, businesses, and visitor to the area:

- The Transit Village should be a Joint Development project, compliant with applicable ADA standards, consisting of a bus terminal, a parking garage, housing units, retail, and office space for multipurpose use.
- Construct a 500-space, four level parking garage, with approximately 125 spaces per level, to supply the area's needs, including addressing the parking needs for MDC Entrepreneurial Center student and faculty body, transit users, the Transportation Hub retail and office users, and overflow from surrounding area's businesses.
- Enter into an agreement between MDC Entrepreneurial Center and the authority operating the parking facility, whereby the college leases a predetermined number of parking spaces. The students, faculty and administrative staff would be given special decals for parking use.
- Develop the Transit Village as an urban center characterized by an emphasis on pedestrian circulation by providing wider sidewalks along its perimeter, proper landscaping, and street furnishings. Amenities should include ample seating areas, lighting for nighttime security, restrooms, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, public telephones, and newspaper stands.

- Ensure design harmony between project's component elements by engendering a unique sense of place and clarity of orientation for users/visitors by emphasizing historic African American educational and cultural theme.
- Structure appropriate transitions between the Transportation Hub and the adjacent residential and business uses, both existing and potential.
- Enhance the climate for private sector investment in the project and adjacent areas.
- Foster joint and associated development that encourages, and is compatible with, increased transit use.
- Promote local environmental assets and resources as they enhance the local community, its functions, and activities.

4.0 IMPACTS

The proposed Transit Village may have direct and indirect effects on the local transportation system as well as the physical and socioeconomic environments of the area. Potential project impacts, their effects, and any mitigative measures that may be necessary are discussed in the following sections. On June 28, 2004, Miami-Dade County DERM provided a Letter of Current Enforcement Status and Recommendations for the proposed project. This letter is included in Appendix C.

4.1 TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS

The major roadways within the study area will not be adversely affected by the construction or the operation of the proposed Transit Village, although additional signalization may be required. NW 7 Avenue is currently an important transit corridor used by buses traveling to/from the downtown area. Since the Transit Village will also be adjacent to the existing transit corridor, no substantial route changes are required for those buses traveling along the corridor. The number of miles traveled by buses and the local traffic patterns along NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street are expected to be similar to existing conditions. Furthermore, the project does not create new transit operations, involve new highway construction, nor does it require modification to existing highways that would increase capacity. Therefore, the proposed Transit Village will not have any significant adverse impacts on the local transportation system. In fact, the relocation is anticipated to reduce traffic congestion (i.e., improve level of service) by reducing the number of on-street bus stops in the area.

The project is expected to increase bus traffic on the local roads surrounding the proposed terminal site including NW 6 Court and NW 60 Street and to modify the direction of traffic flow on NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street. The use of these local roads and changes in traffic flow are required to provide efficient and safe circulation of buses around the terminal. The transportation impacts associated with the increase in bus traffic on these local streets and changing/restricting traffic flow are minimized because the traffic on these local streets are insignificant and other alternative routes are available to motorists. Property access will not be impacted by the proposed project. A detailed Traffic Study has been performed for this project and is included in Appendix D. The study indicates project impacts will be minimal, not requiring roadway capacity improvements.

4.2 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

4.2.1 Air

Under the Clean Air Act (CAA), National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) have been established for six criteria pollutants. These pollutants are: ozone (O₃), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), lead (Pb), and particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns (PM₁₀). These six criteria pollutants are classified as national primary ambient air standards (health related) and secondary ambient air standards (welfare related). The Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) monitors air quality conditions in the county. The jurisdiction of the DERM is countywide and includes the city of Miami where the proposed Transit Village will be located.

Miami-Dade County is a part of the Southeast Florida airshed comprised of Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties. The airshed is in an attainment/maintenance area for the ozone standards under the criteria provided in the CAA Amendments of 1990 and also classified as an attainment area for the five other NAAQS criteria pollutants. Ozone is a pollutant resulting from a photochemical reaction between hydrocarbons (HC) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). The CAA requires maintenance areas to limit the annual emissions expected from regional transportation systems to amounts equal to or less than the motor vehicle annual emissions budgets for HCs and NO_x (i.e., ozone precursors) established in the SIP for the 10 years following the redesignation. The SIP addresses each pollutant that fails to meet the NAAQS and what actions are required to meet the NAAQS. As part of the transportation conformity of the CAA, proposed transportation projects involving federal funds can neither worsen air quality nor interfere with the purpose of the SIP, which is to meet the NAAQS. Therefore, to be in compliance with the CAA, transportation projects cannot create new NAAQS violations, increase the frequency or severity of existing NAAQS violations, nor delay the attainment of the NAAQS. In addition, all federal projects in areas designated by EPA as air quality maintenance areas must be included in a Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) conforming transportation improvement plan (TIP).

The proposed project involves the construction of a new bus transfer facility but does not require the existing bus routes and transit linkages to be substantially modified. All existing bus routes currently pass by the proposed site along NW 7 Avenue and NW 62

Street. The project does not create new transit operations, involve new highway construction nor require modification to existing highways that would increase capacity. Therefore, the project does not substantially modify traffic patterns nor increase traffic congestion (i.e., air emissions). The air emissions are expected to be equal to or less than existing operations in the vicinity of the project site. However, the project will be located within 200 feet of sensitive air quality sites, including a daycare facility, a single-family residence and multi-story condominium, and will increase traffic flow along NW 60 Street and NW 6 Court where these sites are located. Based on the low traffic volumes projected along NW 60 Street and NW 6 Court (i.e., less than 400 vehicles per hour), the air quality impacts to these sites will not be significant or result in exceeding the NAAQS.

The construction of the Transit Village is anticipated to have a beneficial air quality effect by minimizing excess idle emissions associated with vehicle delays at the NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street intersection. The actual air emission reductions will be dependent upon the operation improvement of traffic flow at the intersection of NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street above existing/future levels. Because of the low traffic volumes at this intersection (i.e., the highest approach volume is less than 1,650 vehicles per hour) the potential for air quality impacts is minimal. Therefore, detailed air quality modeling is not warranted and has not been conducted for this project.

Due to the characteristics of this project, the proposed Transit Village is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on the local or regional air quality or contribute to exceeding the NAAQS. Therefore, this project is in conformance with the SIP and CAA because it will not cause any violations of the NAAQS and it is included in the urban area's current approved conforming Miami-Dade County 2005 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

4.2.2 Noise

The construction and operation of the Transit Village are expected to generate noise and a detailed Noise Study was performed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Federal Transit Authority's *Guidance Manual for Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment* (April 1995) to address the potential impacts. The Noise Study Report is included in Appendix E. Noise impacts associated with the proposed project are considered minimal. One single-family residence is expected to be impacted by noise from the daily operation of the Transit Village. Noise abatement measures were

considered, but were found to be not reasonable. Because the construction impacts are short-term and localized, and involve a limited number of noise sensitive sites, the construction noise impacts are considered minimal.

4.2.3 Vibration

The proposed project is anticipated to generate some ground-borne vibration and noise during construction activities but not from the operation of buses associated with the terminal. Buses typically do not cause ground-borne noise or vibration problems because vibration and noise are minimized by the rubber tires and suspension systems of the buses. The few circumstances where buses may have potential vibration impacts will not be involved with the proposed project: rough roads (i.e., expansion joints, speed bumps, or other design features that result in unevenness in the road surface), operation of buses adjacent to sensitive buildings, or operation of buses inside or directly beneath buildings that are vibration sensitive.

Potential vibration impacts associated with the construction of the proposed PAC were assessed in accordance with FTA's Guidance Manual for Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (April 1995). Vibration sensitive land uses include residential and institutional/commercial uses and are grouped into three categories. Category 1 buildings include theaters and auditoriums, vibration-sensitive research and manufacturing, hospitals with vibration-sensitive equipment, and university research operations. Category 2 includes residences and buildings where people normally sleep and includes hotels and hospitals. Category 3 includes institutional land uses with primary daytime use such as schools, churches, other institutions, and quiet offices that do not have vibration-sensitive equipment but still have the potential for activity interference. The closest vibration sensitive site is a two story single-family residence located along NW 6th Court (Category 2), which is approximately 50 ft to the east of the PAC and 15 feet from NW 6th Court.

Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground-borne vibration, depending upon the equipment and methods employed. The effect of ground-borne vibration on buildings is dependent upon the level and the proximity of the vibration sensitive site. At high vibration levels, slight damage to nearby buildings is possible. At moderate levels, low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations can be experienced. At low levels, the effects are not perceptible. Ground vibrations from construction activities rarely reach the levels that can damage structures, but can achieve the audible and perceptible ranges in buildings which are in close proximity. The construction activities that typically

generate the most severe vibrations are blasting and impact pile driving. For this project, no blasting or impact pile driving is proposed or necessary.

The moderate sized construction equipment expected to be used for the construction of the PAC is expected to have vibration levels well below damage thresholds levels of 0.20 inches per second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) at the nearest vibration sensitive site. The PPV at 25 ft for heavily loaded trucks and large bulldozers is 0.076 in/sec and 0.089 in/sec, respectively. Therefore, there will be no significant long- or short-term vibration impacts to adjacent properties or the community at large. However, since the limits of construction and the types of construction equipment required will not be determined until the design phase, it is recommended additional vibration impact analysis be conducted during the design phase or prior to construction to minimize the potential for impacts to vibration sensitive sites.

4.2.4 Wetlands

No jurisdictional wetlands are within or adjacent to the proposed project site. The closest wetlands include those associated with Biscayne Bay, which is approximately 2 miles east of the proposed project. Biscayne Bay, which is an Aquatic Preserve and Outstanding Florida Waters, will not be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, the project will not adversely affect any wetland areas and is in compliance with Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands", requiring federal agencies to avoid direct or indirect support of new construction in wetlands wherever there is a practicable alternative.

4.2.5 Water Resources

The assessment of potential water resources impacts are described in the following sections and includes potential impacts to floodplains, water quality including discharge of dredged or fill material, navigable waterways, coastal zones, and wild and scenic rivers.

4.2.5.1 Floodplains

In accordance with Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, and DOT Order 5650.2, potential impacts to floodplains were evaluated. According to information obtained from FGD L GIS coverage fema9613, which was based on FEMA Map #12025C0180J, the project is located in Zone X. Zone X is the flood insurance rate zone that corresponds to areas outside the 100-year floodplains, areas of 100-year

sheet flow flooding where average depths are less than 1 foot, areas of 100-year stream flooding where the contributing drainage area is less than 1 square mile, or areas protected from the 100-year flood by levees. No Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) or depths are shown within this zone. Therefore, the proposed project will not impact the 100-year floodplain (Zone A) or a regulated floodway.

4.2.5.2 Water Quality

Impacts to water quality can occur by: 1) dredging, discharging fill material, or otherwise introducing pollutants into surface bodies of water; 2) increasing runoff or altering surface drainage patterns; and 3) affecting the water table by dewatering or contaminating subsurface waters. Because of the developed nature of the project site and the lack of any surface water features, the proposed project will not impact water quality. Based on the Florida Administrative Code (FAC.) 62-302 (Surface Water Quality Standards), no Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) or Aquatic Preserves occur within the project study area. Furthermore, if necessary, surface water runoff will be treated through the use of storm water management facilities. Any proposed storm water management facilities design will include, at a minimum, the water quality requirements for water quality impacts as required by the South Florida Water Management District and Miami-Dade County DERM. Therefore, no adverse impacts to water quality are anticipated.

4.2.5.3 Navigable Waterways and Coastal Zones

The proposed Transit Village will not be constructed in or adjacent to any water bodies. Therefore, the proposed project does not involve any navigable waters of the United States or pose a potential pollution hazard. Additionally, because the proposed project is not located within a coastal barrier resource unit, it is not subject to provisions of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act.

4.2.5.4 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The project will not directly or indirectly impact any Wild and Scenic Rivers. Therefore, the coordination requirement for the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act does not apply to this project.

4.2.6 Wildlife and Habitat

The potential for adverse impacts to federal and state listed threatened and endangered wildlife and plant species, state listed Species of Special Concern, and other wildlife as a result of construction of the proposed project was evaluated in accordance with 50 Code

of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 402 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The objectives of this evaluation were to determine if any protected species inhabit the project area, to determine if any protected species present would be adversely impacted by the proposed project, and to develop recommendations for avoidance and minimization of potential impacts.

The potential occurrence of listed species within the project study area was assessed based on consideration of species' range and available habitats within the study area, as well as literature and field reviews. No listed species are known to occur or were observed within the study area during field reviews conducted between May and December 2004. The proposed site consists of urban lots with ornamental trees and palms. Therefore, the proposed project will not impact any natural communities, designated "Critical Habitat" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or result in any impacts to listed species.

Ecologically sensitive areas are defined as woodlands, prairies, marshes, bays, lakes, streams, land forms, and scenic natural areas. None of these natural community types occur within the project area. Therefore, the proposed project will not alter or otherwise affect any ecologically sensitive areas or wildlife habitats. The following twenty five (25) trees are located on the project site:

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Botanical Name</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Diameter at</u>
<u>Breast Height</u>			
Woman's tongue	<i>Albizia lebbbeck</i>	~ 15'	~ 4"
Woman's tongue	<i>Albizia lebbbeck</i>	~ 15'	~ 12"
Woman's tongue	<i>Albizia lebbbeck</i>	~ 20'	~ 9"
Woman's tongue	<i>Albizia lebbbeck</i>	~ 30'	~ 18"
Woman's tongue	<i>Albizia lebbbeck</i>	~ 30'	~ 30"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 15'	~ 12"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 20'	~ 12"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 20'	~ 12"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 20'	~ 12"
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Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 30'	~ 12"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 30'	~ 12"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 30'	~ 12"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 30'	~ 18"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 30'	~ 24"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 30'	~ 24"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 40'	~ 24"
Black olive	<i>Bucida buceras</i>	~ 40'	~ 24"

Cabbage palm	<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	~ 15'	~24"
Umbrella tree	<i>Schefflera actinophylla</i>	~ 20'	~ 9"
Brazilian pepper	<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	~30'	~9"
Brazilian pepper	<i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i>	~15'	~4"

Pursuant to Chapter 24-60 of the Miami-Dade County Code, a DERM Tree Permit will be required to impact the black olive or cabbage palm; however the woman's tongue, umbrella tree, and Brazilian pepper trees are exempt from the permitting requirements as they are designated Prohibited Species under Chapter 24-60.04. Also exempt are ten (10) 15-20' tall hurricane palms (*Dictyosperma album*) because they have a diameter of less than 3" at breast height. The DERM Tree Permit will require the relocation or replacement of the black olive trees and cabbage palm if impacted. Impacts to the black olive trees and cabbage palm will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

4.2.7 Contamination

A Contamination Screening Evaluation Report was prepared to assist in the identification of potential contamination sources and sites within and/or adjacent to the proposed Transit Village site, and is included in Appendix F. Significant contamination was not identified on the project site or in the immediate vicinity of it. Several potential sources of soil and/or groundwater contamination within the project boundaries warrant additional Level II Contamination Assessment; however, it is not anticipated that significant contamination will be discovered. Any contamination discovered will be avoided during the design of the drainage and other subterranean improvements. The community will be protected from any exposed contaminated material by properly containing, marking, and fencing the material.

4.3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

4.3.1 Land Acquisition and Displacement

The Transit Village will be constructed on developed thirteen (13) commercial properties totaling approximately 3.8 acres. The properties have a total assessed value of approximately \$1.8 million. The properties will be acquired in accordance with the Miami-Dade County *Non-Residential Real Estate Acquisition Process in Transportation Projects*, a copy of which is included in Appendix G. No residential relocations will be required by the proposed project.

4.3.2 Community Impacts

A detailed Community Impact Assessment (CIA) / Socio-Cultural Effects (SCE) Analysis Report was prepared for this project and is included in Appendix H. The proposed project will require the acquisition of thirteen (13) commercial properties and may require eighteen (18) or more business relocations. The relocations will be conducted in accordance with the Miami-Dade County *Non-Residential Real Estate Acquisition Process in Transportation Projects*. Though damages to the individual businesses are anticipated, community impacts and adverse socio-cultural effects are not. The proposed project is part of a community redevelopment plan and is anticipated to provide commercial space in excess of what is currently available on the existing site.

As part of the CIA/SCE analysis, field interviews were conducted on and within the vicinity of the project site. The interviews took place on November 3rd, 5th, 10th, 16th, 17th and 19th 2004, and December 15th and 22nd 2004 by approaching pedestrians and asking them if they would participate in a brief opinion survey regarding the proposed project. Additional survey forms were distributed at the public workshops and in the adjacent apartment buildings. It was difficult to find individuals willing to take the time to participate and only seventy-eight (78) interviews were conducted. While this sample size is insufficient to conduct a statistical analysis of the data, the overall finding was that most people interviewed believed the proposed project would benefit the community. Copies of the completed questionnaires are included in Appendix I.

4.3.3 Land Use and Development

The general land use within the vicinity of the proposed project site can be classified as commercial land residential, see Figure 2. The proposed project is consistent with the current city of Miami zoning and implements their goals and objectives. The project will encourage the goals of efficient and alternative transportation modes, improved air quality, and economic development.

4.3.4 Farmlands

No farmlands as defined by 7 CFR 658 are located in the project vicinity or will be affected by the proposed project.

4.3.5 Utilities and Railroads

Construction of the proposed facility will not result in any significant adverse impacts to utilities or railroads. There are no currently-operating rail lines on the site or in the vicinity of the site, nor are there any known major underground or above ground utilities. However, the properties on the site are currently served by minor utilities such as electric, water and sewer. The location of all utilities on site and in the immediate vicinity of the site will be determined during the design phase. Coordination with the utility companies will be conducted during the design phase and prior to any construction activities in order for them to field locate any underground facilities within the project area so they can be avoided or relocated to accommodate the proposed project.

4.3.4 Safety and Security

The proposed project will be designed to enhance the safety and security of transit riders and pedestrians. This includes the use of bus bay loading/unloading areas to replace the existing on-street stops. Facility lighting will enhance the security of the area for MDT patrons.

Figure 2

4.3.5 Visual Impacts

The proposed project will result in a change to the visual aesthetic characteristics of the surrounding area. To minimize the potential for visual impacts, terminal design will comply with local design guidelines and feedback obtained through a series of workshops with the local community. In addition, landscaping will be used to enhance the view of the Transit Village. Therefore, the project is not likely to adversely affect the area's aesthetics.

4.3.6 Environmental Justice

In February 1994, the President of the United States issued Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) requiring federal agencies to analyze and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high adverse human health and environmental effects of Federal actions on ethnic and cultural minority populations and low income populations, when such analysis is required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). An adverse effect on minority and/or low-income populations occurs when:

1) The adverse effect occurs primarily to a minority and/or low income population; or 2) the adverse effect suffered by the minority and/or low-income population is more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect suffered by the non-minority and/or non-low-income populations.

In addition to compliance with Executive Order 12898, any proposed federal project must comply with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that no person will, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, disability, or family composition be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under any program of the federal, state, or local government. Title VIII of the 1968 Civil Rights Act guarantees each person equal opportunity in housing. The proposed project has been developed in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Civil Rights Act of 1968 and in accordance with Executive Order 12898.

An evaluation of environmental, public health, and interrelated social and economic effects of proposed projects on minority and/or low income populations was conducted as part of the CIA/SCE analysis, included in Appendix H. It addresses the seventeen (17) environmental justice criteria identified in Executive Order 12898. In general, the proposed project will not result in any disproportionate adverse impacts to minority and/or low-income families.

4.3.6.1 Air Pollution

There will not be any adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations in terms of air quality. In fact, it is anticipated that the proposed project will have a beneficial air quality effect by minimizing excess idle emissions associated with vehicle delays on NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street.

4.3.6.2 Noise

The Noise Study indicates that there will not be any significant adverse noise impacts associated with the proposed project. This applies to all of the study area, including minority and low-income populations.

4.3.6.3 Water Pollution

Minority and low-income populations will not be adversely affected by off-site discharges of turbid water during the construction phase or by storm water runoff when the Transit Village becomes operational. Efforts will be undertaken to prevent any erosion or turbid water from being discharged off site during the construction phase. During the design phase, MDT will prepare a storm water pollution prevention plan which will specify the methods (e.g., silt fence) that will be used to minimize water quality impacts. In addition, appropriate storm water treatment will also be used to minimize water quality impacts. Therefore, adverse water quality impacts are not expected to occur to any minority or low-income populations.

4.3.6.4 Soil Contamination

The construction and operation of the Transit Village will not create or cause any hazardous substances that could result in soil contamination. Therefore, minority or low-income populations will not be adversely affected by soil contamination.

4.3.6.5 Destruction of Manmade Resources

The proposed site is currently occupied by commercial facilities including an auto repair facility, and a bank with an underground storage tank for an emergency generator. There was also previously a gasoline station on the site. The extent of contamination will be assessed prior to construction and contamination impacts to the local population will be avoided. Therefore, construction of the terminal will not affect minority and/or low-income populations or their property.

4.3.6.6 Destruction of Natural Resources

The area surrounding the project is urban. Therefore, there will not be any adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations in terms of natural resources.

4.3.6.7 Diminution of Aesthetic Values

One of the goals of this project is to enhance the aesthetic quality of the community. Therefore, there will not be any adverse impacts to minority or low-income population in terms of aesthetics.

4.3.6.8 Detriment to Community Cohesion

The proposed project will not divide any neighborhoods or communities. Therefore, there will not be any direct or indirect adverse impacts to minority or low-income communities.

4.3.6.9 Diminution of Economic Viability

The proposed project is expected to promote future economic development in the vicinity. For example, it is likely that the presence of the Transit Village will encourage development of small shops, and/or eateries, and therefore increase opportunities for employment. Therefore, the proposed project is expected to enhance the economic viability of the surrounding community.

4.3.6.10 Detriment to Facilities Access - Public and Private

The proposed project does not create a barrier to access to any of the public and private facilities along the project corridor. It is anticipated that the project will improve access to these facilities. Therefore, the proposed project will not adversely impact facilities access for any minority or low-income populations.

4.3.6.11 Detriment to Services Access - Public and Private

The proposed project will not result in the elimination of any public or private services, including bus transit service. Therefore, the proposed project will not adversely impact service access for any minority or low-income populations.

4.3.6.12 Vibration

There are no land uses that would be affected by vibration. Therefore, vibrations associated with the proposed project will not adversely impacts any minority or low-income populations.

4.3.6.13 Diminution of Employment Opportunities

The proposed project may result in a temporary reduction of job opportunities, however it is anticipated that the replacement terminal will increase economic development and employment opportunities in the area surrounding the Transit Village. Therefore, the proposed project will not adversely impact the employment opportunities of minority or low-income populations.

4.3.6.14 Displacement

Construction of the proposed project will result in several business relocations (mostly tenants) and it will be necessary to acquire property from minority and/or low-income individuals. These impacts are anticipated to be temporary as the new facility will provide more commercial space than is currently available on the site.

4.3.6.15 Traffic Congestion and Impairment to Mobility

This project will not result in substantial changes to bus routes or scheduled service. The proposed project is anticipated to improve traffic congestion by removing the existing on-street bus stops from NW 7 Avenue and NW 62 Street. Therefore, the project is not likely to impair mobility of minority or low-income populations.

4.3.6.16 Exclusion, Isolation or Separation

The Transit Village will not exclude, isolate, or separate any populations, including minority or low-income neighborhoods.

4.3.6.17 Diminution of Department of Transportation Benefits

As previously stated, bus routes or other modes of public transportation will not be eliminated as a result of the project. The project will enhance connectivity to other modes of transportation. Therefore, there will not be any diminution of transportation benefits for minority or low-income populations.

4.4 CULTURAL AND SECTION 4 (f) RESOURCES

4.4.1 Recreational/Parkland Protection

The only potential Section 4(f) resource in the immediate vicinity of the Transit Village project is Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Bike Path, which runs along the south side of NW 62 Street. It is located immediately adjacent to the project site; however there will be no direct or indirect impacts to it. See Figure 3. Furthermore, bicycle access to the resource will be significantly enhanced with the construction of the proposed project.

Figure 3

Therefore, Section 4(f) is not considered applicable because the project does not affect any activities, features, or attributes of potentially Section 4(f) resources properties, nor substantially impair vital functions.

4.4.2 Historic and Archaeological Resources

In accordance with the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, which are implemented by the procedures contained in 36 CFR, Part 800, as well as the provisions contained in Sections 267.061 and 872.05 Florida Statutes, the project has been reviewed for possible impacts to historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the *National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)*, or otherwise of architectural, historical, or archaeological significance. A *Cultural Resource Assessment Survey* was prepared to identify potential project impacts on cultural resources and is included in Appendix J. The survey revealed no historic resources within the Area of Potential Effect that are potentially *NRHP*-eligible, determined *NRHP*-eligible, or *NRHP*-listed, on an individual basis or as part of a district. One resource, the Laborer's Local Union #478 (also known as Laborer's International Union) at 799 NW 62nd Street (8DA7337), is considered potentially eligible for designation by the city of Miami and is currently being evaluated by the city of Miami. No previously recorded archaeological sites were located within the study area and the study area has a low potential for both precontact and historic archaeological sites.

4.5 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

The proposed action will not result in significant construction impacts on surrounding uses or structures. There are no residences or institutional uses adjacent to the project site that will be adversely affected. The project's construction activities will have temporary and minimal impacts on air, noise, and traffic flow within the immediate vicinity. Construction of the Transit Village is expected to be completed within 12 months.

The air quality impact will be negligible and limited primarily to initial construction activities and dust from the hauling of material. Air pollution associated with the creation of airborne particles will be effectively controlled through the use of watering. Minimal

noise and vibration impacts from construction activities are anticipated (see Sections 4.2.2.2 Short-Term Noise Impacts During Construction and 4.2.3 Vibration).

Traffic flow may be affected during construction activities. To minimize traffic delays during construction activities, appropriate signage to provide notice of lane closures and other pertinent information to motorists will be used. In addition, barricades, separation devices, and appropriate signs will be used to ensure the safety and security of motorists and pedestrians in the project area.

5.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

Coordination with the public and other agencies represents an important element in the study process and has been ongoing. A Project Walk Through for the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Corridor Master Plan was conducted on July 14, 2004. A copy of the notice for it is included in Appendix K. The latest coordination efforts include a series of public workshops conducted on August 25, 2004; September 22, 2004; October 20, 2004; November 3, 2004; November 17, 2004; and December 1, 2004. Documentation from these workshops is included in appendices L through Q. A public hearing will also be held for the proposed project,

6.0 COMMITMENTS

To avoid or minimize the impacts of this project, MDT is committed to the following measures:

- If any unexpected contamination is discovered during construction, MDT is committed to implementing necessary remedial actions.